

Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict

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I was a TV reporter covering Israeli issues for a couple of months

It was amazing to me that Israel was always cast as being in the right, and the Palestinians as being perfidious, low life, treacherous, unimaginative antagonists. How can things be so one-sided? Finkelstein provides a simple answer. They are not as simple and one-sided as Americans have been led to believe. A few specifics:

Israel was not uninhabited when the Jews came in. Quite the contrary, it was rather fully occupied by Palestinians. Rather unsurprisingly, they did not exactly welcome the Jews. For the Jews to come in, Palestinians whose families had lived there for generations had to leave. The Jews used terror and atrocities to drive them out. Where did they learn these terror and atrocity methods? Simple. Hitler and Stalin had recently used them against the Jews. The ends justified horrific means.

Israel's wars against the Arabs, even starting with their war of liberation, were wars of aggression by the Arabs, but the other way around. Israel's victories should be no surprise. They not only had the advantage in arms, they had the advantage of timing.

I tended to overlook Israel's failings because I admire the incredible competence of individual Jews. They are very smart and industrious people. However, these admirable virtues do not offset the unconscionable act of having stolen their land from people who had lived there for centuries. Their incredibly artful propaganda, stemming from a nation of lawyers, only compounds the crime. If anything, we should hold such talented people to higher standards than others. They let us down.